

sector agencies are involved in health care services, with the overall goal to transcend time, distance, and structural barriers to provide quality healthcare to Department of Defense beneficiaries. Because of our global role, it is incumbent that the Department of Defense work collaboratively to afford responsive health care services, and this challenge can only be addressed with innovative technology and telecommunication solutions. Hence, I would like to illustrate a few examples from my Hawaii experience, on how the linkage between information, knowledge, and technologies have enhanced access to health care services and improved the quality of care rendered.

Tripler Army Medical Center is the only Department of Defense tertiary care medical treatment facility in the Pacific. Tripler serves the health care needs of more than 750,000 active-duty military, their families, military retirees, retiree families and other Pacific island beneficiaries. Using the systems developed through Department of Defense, such as the Composite Health Care System II, or CHCSII, Corporate Executive Information System or CEIS, AKAMAI, and the Pacific Medical Network or PACMEDNET, have enabled us to improve the quality of care and access to health services for our beneficiaries.

Healthcare information systems and telehealth applications within the Department of Defense strive to accomplish the following 5 goals: Keep Active Duty forces on the job; Reduce the Military Health System skill mix and size in staffing model; Increase productivity of the direct care component; Enhance and measure health and fitness of beneficiaries, and lastly, Promote and measure customer satisfaction with Information Technology.

The healthcare information management initiatives within the Department of Defense focus on research and the value of information and telehealth applications along with implementation of automation support to enhance patient care delivery. I can attest that information management support provided by systems such as the CHCSII, CEIS, and the telehealth support from Akamai and PACMEDNET, have provided significant readiness and humanitarian implications for regional care in the Pacific. Being responsible for delivery of healthcare to a region as big as the Pacific—which encompasses 70 countries and 14 time zones—requires me to use and support the development of technology tools. These technology tools and clinical capability offer tremendous opportunities for reuse by other federal agencies, as well as transferability to private sector agencies.

As stated earlier, healthcare information technologies are an essential element of health care services within the Department of Defense because of the need to overcome the dispersion of beneficiaries over great distances. The telehealth possibilities are highly opportunistic and provide a window on the future. Our technology is a means of demonstrating US engagement in other nations by providing a telepresence in other than US military medical treatment facilities. Specific benefits healthcare technology has offered Tripler Army Medical Center and the Pacific include:

Ability to provide a health profile for a person that will facilitate decision making by a provider who doesn't have access to a complete medical record.

We can integrate patient administrative and clinical data between multiple and diverse healthcare systems.

The same network and technology that provides information for diagnosing and treating patients can also be utilized for teaching via distance learning techniques.

Use of the Internet and web-enabled solutions has fostered a sense of community amongst clinicians and consumers by enabling information sharing, education, and collegial relationships.

From my perspective as a military medical center commander and the Command Surgeon, healthcare information technologies contribute to the readiness and health care delivery mission. I mention this as a single mission because the role of military medicine is to stay trained and ready for contingency operations that directly support the US military. The business of health care in and of itself is not our focus. It is the link between readiness and health care delivery that makes military medicine vital to our nation. The linkage between readiness and health care is good business for the military.

Through the application of information systems and telehealth technologies, the quality of care and utilization of scarce medical resources are positively effected thereby improving both military readiness and health care delivery. Utilization of information systems and telehealth applications provides immediate access even when specialists are not on site. For example, Tripler will be interpreting echocardiograms from Yokoto, Japan and Guam. This can be life saving information if you are talking about the patient's need for surgery or the functioning of the heart after a heart attack. These technologies also project medical specialty expertise without deploying them from the medical center. This saves significant dollars by not taking the medical specialist away for a minimum of two days travel to do a day's work. In addition, for those clinicians who are forward deployed, this access to specialists decreases their professional isolation and improves their decision-making ability. In some cases there is the added benefit of eliminating the need to air-evac patients for definitive care and continuity of care is maintained at their home station.

Healthcare information technologies are good new stories for the Department of Defense but the potential is in its infancy. Only by working with our partners in other government agencies, industry, and academia, will we be able to maximize the investment in technology by increasing its utility and clinical efficacy. In closing, my goals for attending the congressional Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Telehealth Demonstration and Briefing are twofold:

To communicate the reality of the technological solutions currently available within the Department of Defense to provide quality health care and improve access;

And second, to encourage networking among the congressional supporters, speakers, attendees, and exhibit presenters to further maximize our capabilities. As we share information and establish relationships with one another I am sure our collective efforts will produce more and better applications of the technology than what is already here. Ideas for future integration and information management technologies should be the most valuable outcome of today's activities. I hope most of you will be staying through the day and spending time in the exhibit area. Many of the leading edge health care technology companies have displays, as well as Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, and Indian Health Service enterprises. Individually as well as together we are all involved in re-engineering health care

processes to incorporate emerging technologies!

I am very pleased to be sharing the podium with distinguished leaders from Congress, the military, government service, and industry. Those of us in the military know that it is only through the vision and support of Congressional representatives that the Department of Defense has progressed to our current level of sophistication in healthcare information technologies and telehealth. Ladies and Gentlemen, I challenge you to continue to exploit the capabilities in healthcare information technologies; to capitalize on the improvements it can offer the business practice of patient care, and to nurture the positive and sustained impact of technology on enterprise value. I encourage you to take advantage of the sense of community the Internet enables by sharing your ideas and solutions with fellow government, industry and academic colleagues.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. SYLVIO L. DUPUIS

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Sylvio L. Dupuis, Executive Director of McLane, Graf, Raulerson and Middleton Law Firm, for receiving Business NH Magazine's 1999 Business Leader of the Year Award. Dr. Dupuis received this honor due to his outstanding civic involvements coupled with his exemplary leadership in the business world.

Dr. Dupuis took the position of Executive Director in April of 1996. His philosophy of personalization—solving problems with an interview rather than a phone call or a memo—has given him and his law firm an excellent reputation. Under his capable and inspiring leadership, the firm grew from fifty lawyers to eighty. Dr. Dupuis will retire from the McLane Law Firm in June of 1999 but will continue to have an active role in community affairs. The McLane, Graf, Raulerson and Middleton Law Firm is sure to miss Sylvio's leadership.

Besides being one of the most talented and well-established businessmen in the state, Dr. Dupuis has countless other achievements in virtually every facet of New Hampshire life. He has been widely involved in areas ranging from health care to the arts. He is the former President and CEO of Catholic Medical Center, the former Commissioner of the Department of Insurance for New Hampshire, the former President of New England College of Optometry and he has served with distinction, as the Mayor of Manchester, New Hampshire.

I commend Dr. Dupuis for his outstanding leadership and shining example. His varied professional experience shows him to be the ideal representative of New Hampshire business. I wish him the best as the new President of Notre Dame College in Manchester, New Hampshire. I am proud to represent him in the United States Senate.●